



**South Somerset**  
District Council

# **SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN REVIEW DUTY TO COOPERATE STATEMENT**

**OCTOBER 2020 V1**

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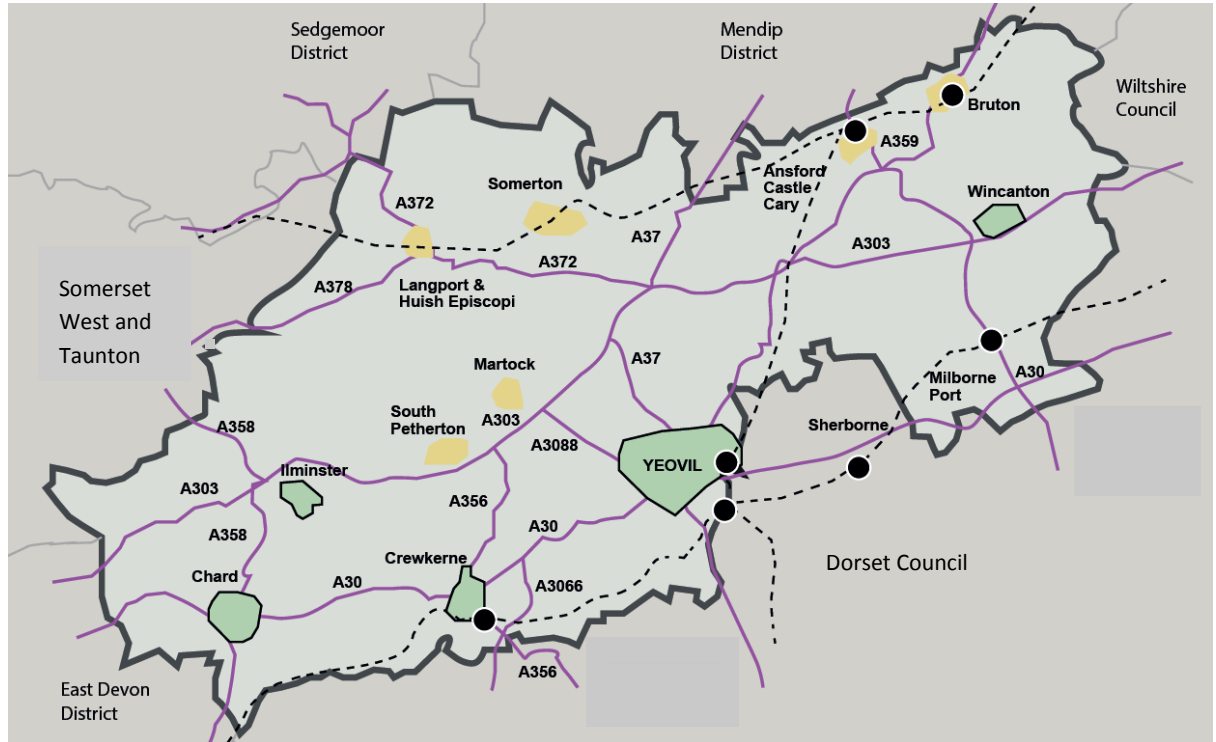
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## 1. The Local Context

- 1.1. South Somerset District Council is surrounded by six local planning authorities: Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, East Devon, Dorset and Wiltshire. The higher tier councils of Somerset and Devon County Councils are also relevant.



## 2. Duty to Cooperate Requirements

- 2.1. The Duty to Cooperate is set out in S.33A of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and through the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 24 (2019). The statute defines the duty in broad terms, and that it applies to Local Plan Authorities, County Councils, and other prescribed bodies.
- 2.2. The Duty requires Local Planning Authorities and other prescribed bodies to engage with a view to maximising the effectiveness of the preparation of development plan documents and other activities so far as they relate to strategic matters. This is normally most important in considering cross boundary strategic issues such as the location of development and the need for strategic infrastructure.
- 2.3. It requires on-going, constructive and active engagement on the preparation of development plan documents and other activities. It is a 'duty to cooperate' not a 'duty to agree', but there must be genuine, positive and continuous dialogue with the intention of reaching agreement.
- 2.4. The Duty requires bodies subject to the requirement to:
- engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis with other Duty to Cooperate bodies on the preparation of plans and supporting activities;
  - have regard to activities of other Duty to Cooperate bodies; and
  - consider joint approaches to relevant activities including plan making.

- 2.5. In addition to the legal requirements set out above, the NPPF emphasises the importance of joint working and co-operation between local authorities and other prescribed bodies on cross boundary issues and issues of shared interest. The NPPF states that Plans should “be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees”. It is complemented and supported by more the detailed advice in the Planning Practice Guidance.
- 2.6. The revised NPPF 2019 strengthens the Duty to Cooperate concept by ensuring that the necessary range of cross-boundary strategic issues are covered and that the cooperation is effective and on-going. Importantly the requirement to achieving and “maintaining effective cooperation” has been brought forward within the NPPF (paragraphs 24-27). These specific requirements have been strengthened by the requirement for authorities to prepare one or more “Statement(s) of Common Ground” (SoCG). The purpose of the SoCGs are to demonstrate that cross-boundary strategic issues have been jointly addressed and how they will be progressed into the future by the Council along with its neighbouring authorities and the other prescribed bodies. Additionally, Planning Policy Guidance provides extensive guidance as to how SoCGs should be prepared.
- 2.7. The SoCG is expected to meet three primary objectives:
- i. providing communities and stakeholders with greater transparency on how and where effective co-operation is and is not happening;
  - ii. encouraging all local planning authorities to co-operate effectively and document the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address them; and
  - iii. helping local planning authorities demonstrate evidence that their plans are based on effective and ongoing cooperation and have sought to produce plans that as far as possible are based on agreements with other authorities/prescribed bodies.
- 2.8. The SoCGs will be prepared in addition to a Duty to Cooperate Statement and contain details on specific cross-boundary strategic matters that have been identified by the Council in association with prescribed bodies and other relevant organisations.
- 2.9. The strategic issues identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are as follows:
- Housing (including affordable) and employment,
  - Retail, leisure and commercial development,
  - Community facilities (health, education, and cultural infrastructure)
  - Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water, flood-risk, and the provision of minerals and energy,
  - Climate change mitigation and adaptation, and;
  - Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscape and green infrastructure.

### 3. Duty to Cooperate Bodies

3.1. The Duty to Cooperate applies to all local planning authorities and county councils in England, and to a number of other prescribed bodies which are specified in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. In relation to South Somerset, the following are considered to be neighbouring local authorities and prescribed bodies:

- Somerset County Council
- Devon County Council
- Sedgemoor DC
- Somerset West and Taunton Council
- Mendip DC
- East Devon DC
- Wiltshire Council
- Dorset Council
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Homes England
- Natural England
- Highways England
- Office of the Rail Regulator
- Civil Aviation Authority
- NHS England
- NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

3.2. In addition, although not defined by statute in the same way as the above prescribed bodies, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships are bodies defined in the Regulations as bodies that local authorities have a duty 'to have regard to' in respect of South Somerset District. There are also other public bodies with whom SSDC needs to cooperate in order to plan for strategic cross-boundary matters. Collectively, in respect of South Somerset District Council, these are:

- Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP)
- Somerset Local Nature Partnership
- Black Down Hills, Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs, and Dorset AONBs.

3.3. Other Duty to Cooperate bodies specified in the Regulations but considered *not* to apply in the context of the South Somerset District Council are:

- The Mayor of London,
- Transport for London,
- Integrated Transport Authorities; and
- The Marine Management Organisation.

#### **4. Local Plan Review Preparation**

- 4.1. The South Somerset Local Plan for the period 2006-2028, was adopted in March 2015. In his report to the Council, the independent Inspector who carried out the Examination into the Local Plan made it clear that an early review of part of the Plan should be undertaken and the decision was subsequently made to review the whole Local Plan.
- 4.2. Work progressed on a Local Plan Review and during December 2017 and January 2018, the Council consulted on the Local Plan Review Issues and Options document. In July 2018 and February 2019 Central Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework and accompanying changes to the Planning Practice Guidance. These amendments to national policy and guidance were taken in to account in the drafting of the Preferred Options Local Plan Review document, and consultation took place between June and September 2019.
- 4.3. Work is proceeding to progress the Local Plan Review to the next stage (Regulation 19 – Publication of the Plan).

#### **5. The Duty to Cooperate Statement**

- 5.1. This statement has been prepared following a consultation with neighbouring authorities and key stakeholders, held during June and July 2020 on a Duty to Cooperate Scoping Report.
- 5.2. The consultation yielded 10 responses and these have been considered and suggestions on cross boundary strategic matters have been incorporated within this statement. Details of the consultation can be found in Appendix 1.
- 5.3. This statement is a live document and will continue to be updated to reflect ongoing discussions and joint working as the Local Plan Review is progressed, and Statements of Common Ground prepared.

#### **6. Cross-boundary Strategic Matters**

- 6.1. Our records underpinning the adopted Local Plan indicate that there a number of strategic issues which require a collaborative cross-boundary approach and partnership working. From a position of progress to date with the South Somerset Local Plan Review, the valuable co-operative working and partnership activity that has already taken place between the Duty to Cooperate bodies (and other stakeholders) over a number of years, is recognised. This includes existing mechanisms for cooperation and consultation on the Local Plan Review to date.
- 6.2. It is considered that Table 6.1 identifies the cross-boundary strategic matters to be addressed by the South Somerset District Local Plan 2020-2040 and suggests the specific issues that require active cooperation between the Duty to Cooperate partners.

**Table 6.1 Identification of Cross Boundary Strategic Themes and Issues**

Cross-boundary strategic matters identified	Specific cross-boundary strategic issues to be addressed through Duty to Cooperate/SoCGs
Housing needs and distribution	<p>Ensuring that the distribution of housing growth across the Duty to Cooperate area does not adversely impact on housing delivery and the role and function of settlements within the district.</p> <p>Overall housing requirement – instances where a higher target may be appropriate, including unmet need from neighbouring areas.</p>
Gypsy and traveller needs and provision	Facilitating adequate gypsy and traveller pitches and transit sites to address identified needs.
Employment land provision and jobs required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing any cross-boundary issues regarding the provision of employment space</li> <li>• Facilitating local economic recovery and inclusive growth caused by the widespread disruption to the economy as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Close working with the Somerset authorities and the LEP will be required in this area.</li> </ul>
Retail, leisure and commercial development	Any potential for further retail development at the Peel Centre, Yeovil is likely to adversely impact on Yeovil Town Centre and is a cross-boundary issue for discussion with Dorset Council.
Mitigation of and adaptation to the climate emergency / managing flood risk	Mitigating/adapting to the effects of climate change, including managing flood risk with regard to the emerging Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and existing mechanisms for cooperation.
Conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment including landscape character and European sites	<p>Natural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring a consistent approach to the conservation and enhancement of Protected Landscapes and their settings within the district.</li> <li>• Embedding the 25 Year Environment Plan agenda around green infrastructure, nature recovery networks and biodiversity net gain.</li> <li>• Ensuring that the cumulative impacts of proposed levels of growth does not result in likely significant effects on the European Sites.</li> <li>• Somerset Levels and Moors SPA/Ramsar Site and River Axe SAC (water quality - phosphates),</li> <li>• Mendip Woodlands SAC, Quants SAC, Bracketts Coppice, West Dorset Alder Woods SAC, and Rooksmoor SAC (air quality – atmospheric nitrogen).</li> </ul> <p>Historic Environment</p> <p>Ensuring that the significance of heritage assets and their settings are conserved and enhanced.</p>



Cross-boundary strategic matters identified	Specific cross-boundary strategic issues to be addressed through Duty to Cooperate/SoCGs
Provision of utilities infrastructure (including telecommunications, digital, water and energy)	
Provision of health and education infrastructure and local facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of sufficient school-place capacity in relation to site allocations to avoid cross-boundary impacts.</li> <li>• Provision of sufficient healthcare facilities to accommodate future growth and changing healthcare priorities and needs.</li> </ul>
Provision of transport infrastructure for all modes of transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing the delivery of development to ensure there are no detrimental impacts on the transport network including the local highway network and Strategic Road Network (in the South Somerset Local Plan area comprises a stretch of the A303 of approximately 42 miles. Despite being in a neighbouring district, the M5 (J25) also has the potential to be affected by development in South Somerset's Local Plan area).</li> <li>• Seeking to reduce the need to travel and maintain self-contained settlements.</li> </ul>
Minerals and waste planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that minerals safeguarding areas are recognised in the Local Plan Review and minerals of national and local importance are not unnecessarily sterilised by development.</li> <li>• Recognition of any waste planning issues that may require further consideration in the Local Plan Review..</li> </ul>

6.3. Themes listed with no identified issues, whilst recognised as cross boundary and strategic, are considered unlikely to require active collaboration between the Duty to Cooperate bodies in strategic planning terms.

6.4. As the Local Plan Review progresses towards Publication stage, SSDC intend that SoCGs are prepared with Duty to Cooperate bodies and maintained to record progress on strategic cross-boundary issues and to confirm matters agreed with regard to the Duty to Cooperate. Table 6.2 provides a summary of the key strategic cross-boundary issues and the relevant partners to address these matters.

Table 6.2: Summary of strategic issues and relevant Duty to Cooperate bodies:

<i>Duty to Cooperate Bodies</i>	Housing Needs & Distribution	G&T Provision and Transit sites	Employment needs and local economic recovery	Retail development	Climate change and flood risk	Protected Landscapes	Natural Environment	Historic Environment	Health and education infrastructure and	Transport Network	Minerals and Waste Safeguarding
<i>Somerset County Council</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓
<i>Mendip District Council</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	
<i>Sedgemoor District Council</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	
<i>Somerset West &amp; Taunton Council</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
<i>East Devon Council</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	
<i>Dorset Council</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Wiltshire Council</i>	✓	✓				✓				✓	
<i>Environment Agency</i>	✓				✓		✓				
<i>Historic England</i>	✓							✓			
<i>Natural England</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓	
<i>Homes England</i>	✓										
<i>Highways England</i>	✓									✓	
<i>NHS England</i>	✓								✓		
<i>NHS Somerset CCG</i>	✓								✓		
<i>Office of Rail Regulation</i>	✓									✓	
<i>Heart of the SW LEP</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	
<i>Civil Aviation Authority</i>											
<i>Somerset Local Nature Partnership</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓				
<i>AONBs<sup>1</sup></i>	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		

<sup>1</sup> Black Down Hills, Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs, and Dorset AONBs

## 7. Mechanisms for Cooperation

- 7.1. South Somerset District Council is actively involved in a number of cross-boundary and joint-working relationships that have informed the preparation of the Local Plan Review. Many of these are formalised, regular meetings or forums where a variety of topics are discussed, and some of these are tailored for the purposes of preparing the Local Plan Review.
- 7.2. These existing partnerships are an invaluable mechanism for facilitating Duty to Cooperate discussions. They have enabled regular direct contact with a range of bodies. A number of these partnerships have actively followed progress of the Local Plan, making it a standing agenda item at meetings and dedicating agenda time to discuss emerging evidence and specific issues.
- 7.3. Some of the existing partnerships have meetings at officer, senior officer and elected member levels. For example, the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy (Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset) has been produced countywide by Somerset's five councils, who have agreed that action needs to be taken and work needs to be conducted in collaboration with communities. The Councils have come together to produce the strategy that is intended to commit to and to work towards Somerset being carbon neutral by 2030, working together with communities, interest groups, businesses and other relevant stakeholders. This demonstrates that co-operation has been taking place at all levels within the Duty to Cooperate bodies and that there is corporate buy-in to the project from the local authorities in Somerset to implement more detailed action plans with relevant partners and communities.
- 7.4. Table 7.1 sets out details of regular partnership meetings that have a direct relevance to the Local Plan Review (including their frequency and role). All of these meetings include at least one of the Duty to Cooperate bodies identified in Table 6.2.

**Table 7.1: Regular Partnership Meetings**

Group/Meeting	Includes	Role
<b>Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (meets quarterly)</b>	The Board includes members who hold/have held senior leadership roles across key sectors balanced by representation from local authorities.	Reporting to the Board are the three Leadership Groups of People, Place and Business. These are made up of local business leaders, business group representatives and local authority officers who devise projects for bidding for the funding streams that become available.
<b>Somerset Growth Board (meets quarterly)</b>	Somerset local authorities, business representative organisations, and other key stakeholders including the LEP and Somerset's Further Education sector.	The Somerset Growth Plan was endorsed by all Somerset Local Authorities in February 2014. This plan sets out Somerset's priorities for the promotion of economic growth to 2020 and it aims to maximise sustainable employment and housing growth through local opportunities. The key purpose of the Somerset Growth Board will be to take ownership of the Somerset Growth Plan and maximise opportunities to help deliver our key economic priorities

Group/Meeting	Includes	Role
<b>Somerset Strategic Planning Conference (SSPC)</b> (meets quarterly)	Local planning authorities in Somerset and adjoining districts, including other Duty to Cooperate bodies such as the Marine Management Organisation and Clinical Commissioning Group.	Officer-led forum for discussion of addressing all aspects of planning policy including minerals and waste. Promotes joint-working opportunities and the Duty to Cooperate.
<b>Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership (SSHPP)</b> (meets quarterly)	Member and officer representation from each of the Somerset districts and the County Council.	Responsible for, and monitors progress of the Somerset Housing Strategy 2019-2023 and the associated Delivery Plan. SSHPP sits within the governance arrangements of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board (see below).
<b>Somerset Health &amp; Wellbeing Board</b> (meets quarterly)	The board brings together people who plan and commission (buy) services from health and social care, children services, locally elected councillors and local organisation Healthwatch.	Development of the Improving Lives Strategy 2019-2028 – priorities include county infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services; safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment; fairer life chances and opportunity for all; and improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer.
<b>Somerset Rivers Authority</b> (Full Board meetings held quarterly)	Partners in the SRA are all Somerset Local Authorities, the Parrett and the Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee.	<p>The SRA provides Somerset an extra level of flood protection and resilience, above and beyond the usual activities of other Flood Risk Management Authorities, such as councils, Internal Drainage Boards and the Environment Agency.</p> <p>The SRA raises extra money, funds additional work, provides extra information, and provides greater opportunities for different stakeholders and places to work together.</p>
<b>Somerset Local Nature Partnership Board</b>	Members of the Steering Group include Natural England, AONBs, Somerset County Council and SSDC.	The newly formed LNP Board and Forum will be critical in providing leadership and embedding the value and importance of the natural environment into all decision-making processes including planning and policy decisions across the wider county.

## 8. Joint working on strategies and infrastructure planning

- 8.1. Many of the partnerships detailed above have produced, adopted and published joint strategies, consistent with the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate. This demonstrates that the process of engagement and cooperation has been effective since it has resulted in outcomes that all parties considered they could sign up to. Many of these strategies have direct relevance to the Local Plan. In addition, several of the partnerships have jointly commissioned studies or evidence base work which has, in turn, influenced the policies of the Local Plan Review.
- 8.2. Table 8.1 details many of the jointly produced strategies and jointly commissioned studies that relate to the Local Plan Review. All of the listed strategies and documents were produced by or commissioned by at least one prescribed body for the Duty to Cooperate.

**Table 8.1: Jointly Produced Strategies and Evidence**

Project / Document	Commissioned/Produced by	Purpose
<b>Identifying HMAs and FEMAs in Somerset and the surrounding areas 2015</b>	Somerset district councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset, Taunton Deane and West Somerset) commissioned Opinion Research Services to undertake the study.	To identify the functional geographies of Housing Market Areas (HMAs) and Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs) for the county as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
<b>Joint Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2019)</b>	Somerset West & Taunton and South Somerset Councils commissioned WSP to produce the assessment.	The SFRA assesses the risk of flooding to the area from all sources, now and in the future, taking account of the impacts of climate change. This includes the risk of flooding from watercourses, the sea, surface water, groundwater, reservoirs, sewers and artificial sources.
<b>Somerset Housing Strategy 2019 - 2023</b>	All Somerset local authorities	The strategy seeks to achieve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong and effective strategic leadership</li> <li>• housing and economy - a local economy that provides opportunity for all</li> <li>• housing and health - homes in Somerset that are good for your Health</li> <li>• housing and society - a society that supports the vulnerable</li> </ul>
<b>Local Housing Needs Assessment (commenced 2020) incorporating Economic</b>	Somerset West and Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council commissioned Opinion Research	Preparation of a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) for the period 2020-2040 to identify the size, type and tenure of homes that will be needed in the future, and the housing needs of different

Project / Document	Commissioned/Produced by	Purpose
<b>Development Needs Assessment/job forecasting</b>	Services to undertake the assessment with supporting economic forecasting provided by Hardisty Jones Associates.	groups, including affordable housing. This is within the context of minimum number of homes required under the standard method for calculating local housing need. (LHN) using the standard method set out in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
<b>Gypsy &amp; Traveller Accommodation Assessment Commenced 2020</b>	All Somerset district councils commissioned RRR Consulting to undertake the GTAA.	Analysis of the latest evidence to identify the accommodation needs of the traveller community across Somerset. To enable the LPA's to set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers and plot targets for travelling showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities
<b>Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2015/16 Update commenced 2020</b>	South Somerset DC in cooperation with a range of infrastructure providers.	The IDP identifies existing deficiencies and surpluses of infrastructure and looks at what is required in the future, when it will be needed, who is responsible for providing it, how it will be funded and, if there are funding gaps, how they will be bridged.
<b>South Somerset Transport Assessment</b>	South Somerset DC in cooperation with Somerset County Council (Local Highways Authority) and Highways England	The Transport Assessment provides an all-mode transport evidence base in support of the Council's emerging Local Plan Review. The transport evidence base provides modelling for both the current traffic situation as well as that at the end of the plan period taking into account the economic and housing growth aspirations set out within the plan, including the infrastructure necessary to support preferred site allocations.
<b>Heart of the South West Local Industrial Strategy (2019)</b>	Heart of the South West LEP	<p>The Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) has been drafted and is awaiting sign-off from Government.</p> <p>The LIS sets out the aspiration to transform the economy through clean and inclusive growth.</p> <p>A review to identify which parts of the economy had the greatest potential for delivering productivity improvements, as well as contributing to the National Grand Challenges identified three key areas. These reinforce the clean and inclusive growth agenda and are focused on energy, engineering and digital opportunities.</p>

Project / Document	Commissioned/Produced by	Purpose
<b>Somerset Growth Plan</b>	Developed in partnership with Somerset local authorities, business organisations and other key stakeholders.	The Growth Plan sets out Somerset's plans to promote growth between now and 2030. The purpose of the Growth Plan is to attract and guide investment; to overcome barriers; and maximise sustainable growth from local opportunities, benefiting Somerset's communities, businesses and residents.
<b>Heart of the South West – Covid-19 Route Map to Recovery</b>	Heart of the South West LEP.	This route map will sit alongside the Local Industrial Strategy and inform recovery actions to rebuild the economy in line with the overall aspirations
<b>Somerset Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (to be commenced 2020)</b>	Somerset's local authorities.	Setting out a business case for Somerset's asks and offers to Government in its efforts to recover from the socio-economic impact of Coronavirus and provide a stimulus into ongoing sustainable growth
<b>Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy (in draft)</b>	Somerset County Council Mendip DC Sedgemoor DC Somerset West and Taunton Council South Somerset DC	The Climate Emergency Strategy will identify ways in which Somerset can work towards being carbon neutral by 2030. The Strategy will also identify the adaptations required to ensure Somerset is resilient to predicted environmental changes induced by climate change. The 5 Somerset Councils recognised the importance of this work and have committed significant Officer and Member time and expertise; reaching out to partners and centres of expertise for additional support.
<b>Investing in Natural Capital for the Heart of the South West, 2019</b>	Jointly developed by the LEP and Local Nature Partnership.	Investing in Natural Capital for the Heart of the South West is a joint advocacy document produced by Devon, Somerset and Plymouth LNPs with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership. It explains what natural capital is, why it is critical to social and economic wellbeing of the region, and how it can be embedded into delivery and strategic decision making.
<b>Somerset's Ecological Network 2016</b>	Produced by Somerset Wildlife Trust, and Somerset County Council, with the support of Forest Research, Somerset Environmental Records Centre and First Ecology.	A set of ecological networks have been produced for four broad habitat types in Somerset: Broad-leaved Woodland; Priority Grasslands (including calcareous, acid and neutral grassland); Heathland and Acid Grassland; and Fen, Marsh and Swamp. It identifies the remaining areas of priority habitat, areas for biodiversity

Project / Document	Commissioned/Produced by	Purpose
		enhancement, and the connections that need to be made to link these areas up across the landscape.
<b>Somerset Nature Recovery Network Strategy (in preparation)</b>	Somerset Local Nature Partnership (Naturally Somerset).	A strategy for delivering the Nature Recovery Network which draws on spatial information about ecosystem services, for example through a natural capital assessment, to enable opportunities for the delivery of multiple benefits to be identified, to provide the best value for time and money invested. The strategy will enable a co-ordinated and demonstrable delivery of biodiversity net gain.
<b>AONB Management Plans</b>	Prepared by each AONB on behalf of the partner Local Authorities.	Legislation requires that Management Plans are produced and reviewed every 5 years. An AONB Management Plan is a document which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• highlights the special qualities and the enduring significance of the AONB;</li> <li>• presents an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole;</li> <li>• sets out agreed policies which will help secure that vision;</li> <li>• identifies what needs to be done in order to achieve these outcomes;</li> <li>• states how the condition of the AONB and its management will be monitored.</li> </ul>



## Appendix 1- Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement Consultation

The Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement was available for consultation during June/July 2020.



**South Somerset District Council**  
www.southsomerset.gov.uk

Date : 16th June 2020  
Your Ref :  
Our Ref :  
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Dear Duty to Cooperate Partner

### **SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN REVIEW DUTY TO COOPERATE AND STATEMENTS OF COMMON GROUND**

Over the summer of 2019 we consulted on our Preferred Options Local Plan Review document. As the Local Plan Review progresses to the next stage (Regulation 19), I am writing to you, in connection with the implementation of the Duty to Cooperate (DtC) legislation. In order to comply with the duty we aim to identify, discuss and hopefully agree on, the strategic cross-boundary issues which affect both of our organisations.

We would appreciate your feedback on whether you agree with the Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement which sets out the cross-boundary strategic issues affecting the South Somerset District Local Plan area, and whether they require positive plan making and co-operation in order to prepare an effective local plan for the area.

It is emphasised that the statement relates purely to cross-boundary strategic issues. Co-operative working process on the full range of land use planning issues within the Local Plan area is not the subject of this letter. Accordingly, you will have been informed of previous Regulation 18 consultation stages of the Local Plan Review process (i.e. the Issues and Options 2017 and Preferred Options 2019 documents - available on our [website](#)).

In order to help both of our organisations fulfil the Duty and to help South Somerset District Council positively prepare an effective Local Plan for its local planning authority area, we would welcome your views regarding whether you / your organisation agree(s) with:

1. the summary of cross-boundary strategic matters affecting the South Somerset District Local Plan area set out in the Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement,
2. the way in which the specific issues identified in relation to these themes should be addressed, and
3. the identification of the relevant bodies for each strategic cross-boundary issue.

If you do not agree with part or all of the above, could you please briefly set out why your view differs and provide your own summary of cross-boundary strategic issues affecting South Somerset District Local Plan area and the way in which you consider they should be addressed.

At this stage of the Local Plan Review process, it is suggested that one or more Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) are prepared with DtC bodies to record progress on strategic cross-boundary issues and to confirm matters agreed with regard to the DtC. The SoCGs will continue to be updated to reflect consultation and co-operation processes until the Local Plan Review is submitted for examination in 2021.

I would be grateful if you could please respond with any comments to me by **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020**. If you are unable to meet the deadline, please could you provide your reasons?

In the meantime, should you have any queries or questions about the DtC Scoping Statement or the preparation of SoCGs, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Tessa Saunders  
Specialist - **-Strategic Planning**

Letter sent to:

- Somerset County Council
- Devon County Council
- Mendip DC
- Sedgemoor DC
- Somerset West and Taunton Council
- East Devon DC/Greater Exeter Strategic Plan authorities
- Wiltshire Council
- Dorset Council
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Homes England
- Natural England
- Highways England
- Office of the Rail Regulator Natural England
- Civil Aviation Authority
- NHS England
- NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

Additional public bodies with whom SSDC needs to cooperate in order to plan for strategic cross-boundary matters:

- Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP)
- Somerset Local Nature Partnership
- Black Down Hills, Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs, and Dorset AONBs.

Responses were received from the following Duty to Cooperate Partners:

- Black Down Hills AONB
- Cranborne Chase AONB
- Dorset Council
- East Devon Council
- Highways England
- Natural England
- Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group
- Somerset County Council
- Somerset West and Taunton Council
- Somerset Wildlife Trust (Somerset Local Nature Partnership)